

Breathe Easier California

Breathe Easier is the Bureau of Automotive Repair's Public Awareness Campaign to promote understanding about the negative effects of vehicle-produced air pollution and increase participation in the Consumer Assistance Program (CAP). CAP pays motorists to voluntarily retire their high-polluting vehicles, or it provides assistance toward the repair of their vehicle to pass a smog check.

- As part of his environmental agenda, on March 16, 2005, Governor Schwarzenegger launched the *Breathe Easier* campaign to call on Californians to help reduce vehicle-related air pollution.
- According to the California Air Resources Board, California vehicles produce more than 2,000 tons of pollution every single day, taking a heavy toll on our air quality.
- Under CAP, the Bureau of Automotive Repair will pay motorists \$1000 to permanently retire their polluting car by having it crushed, or give them up to \$500 to help with repairs so that their car passes a Smog Check.
- To qualify for vehicle retirement, a vehicle that fails its Smog Check must have been continuously registered for 24 months, pass an inspection at the dismantler site, and meet certain other eligibility requirements. If approved, the owner will receive a check from the dismantling facility that retires the vehicle.
- To qualify for repair assistance, the owner of a car that fails its Smog Check must meet income-eligibility requirements or have been directed to a Test Only station, and meet certain other eligibility requirements.
- For vehicle owners, the first step to becoming eligible for CAP is to complete and submit a CAP application. Owners can obtain a CAP application online at www.smogcheck.ca.gov, or by calling toll free 1-800-952-5210.
- CAP targets high-polluting and gross-polluting vehicles, which are the worst polluters. Gross polluters make up about 10 percent of all the vehicles that are on the road, but they are putting out more than 50 percent of the vehicle pollution.
- According to the Air Resources Board, on average, older vehicles (20-25 years old) produce up to 30 times more emissions than newer vehicles. A gross-polluting car can produce up to 40 pounds of smog-forming vehicle emissions per year.

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- CAP's goal is to retire 15,000 high-polluting vehicles annually in California. Every vehicle retired is another step towards cleaner air and protecting our environment.
- Taking 15,000 high-polluting cars off the road represents more than 900 tons of smog-forming pollutants taken out of the air. Over time, that number will add up to major improvements in our air quality.
- The *Breathe Easier* campaign includes paid television and radio advertising, public services announcements and a corresponding outreach effort by the Department of Consumer Affairs, which helps educate motorists about the harmful health effects of vehicle-related smog.
- The link between vehicle pollution, poor air quality and negative health effects is well-documented.
- According to the 2001 California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), one of every ten children in California suffers from respiratory disease.
- The California Department of Health Services reports that asthma hospitalizations cost \$480 million in California in 2000. Each year, 15,000 children are hospitalized because of asthma.
- Asthma disproportionately affects school-age children and is a leading cause of school absenteeism and missed workdays and lost productivity for adults.
- According to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, in 1998 asthma cost an estimated \$1.3 billion in direct and indirect costs in California.
- In September 2004, the CAP vehicle-retirement program was reinstated after a two-year suspension that was a result of budget cutbacks. The current fiscal-year 04/05 budget year includes \$4.5 million for vehicle retirement. Proposed for the fiscal-year 05/06 budget year is an augmentation of up to \$16.3 million, which was appropriated through legislation authored last year and signed by into law by Governor Schwarzenegger.
- The funds for CAP come from a portion of the annual \$12 fee paid by owners of new-model-year vehicles, now exempt from Smog Check for six years.